

much of an acquisition if he should. One, or perhaps two, considerable changes, will be regarded as signs of a liberal inquirer, and therefore the party to which his first or his second intellectual conversion may assign him, will receive him gladly. But he will be deemed to have abdicated the dignity of reason, when it is found that he can adopt no principles but to betray them ; and it will be perhaps justly suspected that there is something extremely infirm in the structure of that mind, whatever vigour may mark some of its operations, to which a series of very different and sometimes contrasted theories, can appear in succession demonstratively true, and which imitates sincerely the perverseness which Petruchio only affected, declaring that which was yesterday, to a certainty, the sun, to be to-day, as certainly, the moon.*

It would be curious to observe in a man who should make such an exhibition of the course of his mind, the sly deceit of self-love. While he despises the system which he has rejected, it must not imply so great a want of sense in *him* once to have embraced it, as in the rest, who were then or are now its adherents and advocates. No, in *him* it was no debility of intellect, it was at most but its immaturity or temporary lapse; and probably he is prepared to explain to you that such peculiar circumstances, as might warp a very strong and liberal mind, attended his consideration of the subject, and misled him to admit the belief of what others prove themselves fools by believing.

Another thing apparent in a record of changed opinions would be, what I have noticed before, that there is scarcely any such thing in the world as simple conviction. It would be amusing to observe how the judgment had, in one instance, been overruled into acquiescence by the admiration

* Petruchio was a gentleman of Verona in Shakspeare's "Taming of the Shrew." " Petruchio," says Hazlitt, "is a madman in his senses, a very honest fellow, who hardly speaks a word of truth, and succeeds in all his tricks and impostures." The passage referred to in the text is in Act IV., Scene 5—

Petruchio. How bright and goodly shines the moon!

Katharina. The moon ! the sun ; it is not moonlight now.

Pet. I say it is the moon that shines so bright.

Kath. I know it is the sun that shines so bright.

Pet. Now, by my mother's son, and that's myself, It shall be moon, or star, or what I list.